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ITALY.

No. 8.



FLAG SERIES.

FACTS 

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Foreign Mission Fields.



COMPILED BY

MRS. O. W. SCOTT.



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WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY,
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
36 BROMFIELD STREET, - - - BOSTON, MASS.

ITALY.

FACTS

IN

Questions and Answers

FOR

MISSION BANDS AND JUNIOR LEAGUES.

BY

MRS. O. W. SCOTT.

BOSTON, MASS.:
WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
36 BROMFIELD STREET.

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ITALY.

THE COUNTRY.

1. Q. Where is Italy?

In the south of Europe. It extends, in a boot-shaped peninsula, into the Mediterranean Sea, being bounded on the east by the Adriatic Sea.

2. Q. What is its area?

One hundred and fourteen thousand four hundred and fifteen square miles. The islands of Sicily, Sardinia and Elba belong to Italy.

3. Q. What is its population?

In 1897 it was 31,290,490.

4. Q. What is its capital?

Rome is its capital and chief city. It has been famous for many centuries and possesses great historic interest.

5. Q. Mention some outline facts.

It was founded by Romulus 753 B. C. That section of Italy is of volcanic

origin. The "City of the Seven Hills," the "Mistress of the World," has for its foundations enormous beds of lava projected from the Alban Hills in bygone ages. It is situated on the famous Tiber, a rapid muddy stream subject to marvellous and sometimes destructive freshets. It contains a large number of churches, among them the celebrated cathedral of St. Peter.

6. Q. Mention other principal cities.

Florence, which was the former capital; Naples, the largest city, is famous for its beautiful bay; Genoa, for being the birthplace of Columbus. Venice is a city of great attractions, is built upon many small islands, and canals largely take the place of streets. The principal commercial cities are Venice, Leghorn, Genoa, Naples, Messina and Palermo.

7. Q. What is the length of Italy's coast line?

More than 2,000 miles. Much of this is bold and rocky, while other portions are low, level and marshy.

8. Q. What are its mountain ranges?

The Apennines, a broad mountainous belt, giving sublime scenery; and on the north between Italy and Switzerland and Austria rise the majestic Alps.

9. Q. Name its rivers.

There are but two important ones, the Po and the Adige, although the Arno and the Tiber are better known. In the southern portion of Italy the rivers terminate in swamps, which are the source of disease.

10. Q. What are used in irrigating the land?

Canals were constructed in the middle ages, which have greatly benefited agriculture.

11. Q. Are there lakes in Italy?

There are numerous lakes, most of them in the north, some of which are celebrated for their picturesque scenery. Maggiore and Como are among these.

12. Q. Has this country mineral wealth?

Its mineral wealth has been known

for many ages. There are mines of lead, silver, copper, iron, bronze, alum and sulphur. Ancient pits and ruins of founderies are discovered, showing former mining industries.

13. *Q.* Is the soil fertile?

Every part of the country is capable of great productiveness. In many places the Apennines are cultivated in terraces almost to their summits. Abundant harvests are the rule, and even the marshy sections may be reclaimed as they were formerly under cultivation.

14. *Q.* What are the principal productions?

There is a variety of agricultural products. Wheat, corn, barley and oats, rye, rice and all sorts of vegetables abound. Luscious fruits—oranges, lemons, citrons, figs, almonds, dates—are found in central and southern Italy. The olive is indigenous, and its culture is a growing industry.

15. *Q.* What is another industry?

The culture of grapes for the manufacture of wine.

16. Q. What is the most important product?

Silk, which is exported in large quantities. The mulberry tree grows in the basin of the Po, and much attention is given the silkworm.

17. Q. Mention other industries.

The manufacture of straw goods, earthenware, glass, artificial flowers, jewelry, macaroni and many fancy articles.

18. Q. What animals are found?

Not a large variety of species, but those common to Europe, such as horses, cattle, sheep, swine, goats and mules. The sea furnishes a variety of shell and other fish for food.

19. Q. What is the climate of Italy?

In the north, cold weather is known in winter, frosts beginning in November and lasting until March or April. The centre of the country rarely sees frost, and snow appears only on the mountain tops. In the south snow and ice are unknown, save on the top of Mount Etna, and tropical plants flourish. The sky

of deepest blue is celebrated in song and story, and the wonderful atmosphere attracts health seekers.

20. *Q.* Mention one detraction.

There are frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions in southern Italy and Sicily. Mount Vesuvius, near Naples, and Etna, on the island of Sicily, are well-known volcanoes.

THE PEOPLE.

21. *Q.* What does history tell us of the ancient dwellers in Italy?

In the vicinity of Rome are indications of a prehistoric age, in which savage nomadic tribes wandered through the dense forests. It is thought that this race made Saint Peter's hill a kind of sacred spot a thousand years before Saint Peter was born. Then came an agricultural people called Latins. They had a divinity called Saturn, "the good sower." Then came Sabines, Pelasgians, Etruscans; but the history of Rome and that of Italy began with the "Wall

of Romulus," a fragment of which still remains. This wall, built by Romulus and his men, enclosed about twenty-four acres, and made possible the building of a city, conquest and dominion.

22. *Q.* Describe the Italians of to-day.

The Italian of to-day is rather slender than stout, but strong and agile. He has a dark complexion, expressive countenance, sparkling eyes, black hair and a grave gait. Many of the women are fine looking, with beautiful eyes and features.

23. *Q.* Are the Italians of to-day like the Romans of old?

Many of the characteristics remain, but circumstances and changed condition have had a paralyzing effect.

24. *Q.* How large a proportion is of other nationalities?

About 350,000, composed of German, French, Jews, Greeks, Albanians, etc.

25. *Q.* For what are Italians noted?

Their love of music and art. After the age of military greatness came that of

literature, art and science, and even the common people did not escape its impress.

26. Q. Describe the music of the people.

One peculiarity is that, light hearted as the Italians are, their songs are almost invariably written in a minor key. But these are sung by men, women and children with correctness and spirit. The wandering musicians, common to the city streets, are nearly always good singers. Even the venders of fruit and fish, the umbrella mender and the old clo' man have musical calls which produce a sort of harmony peculiar to the country.

27. Q. Are the people industrious?

The people of northern Italy are extensively engaged in manufacture. Agriculture, vine raising, wine making and silk weaving employ many of the inhabitants of lower Italy, while the learned professions are the same as in our own land. But the nature of the Italian is ease-loving, and there is a large class, es-

timated as one-fifth of the population, who toil not nor spin. Many of these gain a livelihood by begging.

28. *Q.* What is said of the beggars of Rome?

There are established beggars, who make of their business a kind of guild, and frequently grow wealthy. Others make capital of some deformity or disease. "To have no legs at all is to stand on the best footing with fortune." This large percentage of mendicants shows a lack of national pride and integrity.

29. *Q.* What is said of home life in Italy?

The affectionate nature of the people tends to make home ties very strong. Children are merry and happy, but as they grow older they—especially the girls—feel the effects of the lax system of education and morals which prevails in all Italian cities.

30. *Q.* How does this influence them?

The Italian girl has but one ambition,—to marry a rich man who can give her

ease and luxury. Money is the one mark of aristocracy. This is not because her nature is sordid, but is the result of defective training.

THE GOVERNMENT.

31. Q. What is the government of Italy?

Italy was constituted a kingdom in 1861. King Humbert I, born in 1844, the eldest son of Victor Emmanuel, came to the throne January 9, 1878.

32. Q. Has the king absolute control?

The executive power is vested in him and is exercised through responsible ministers. There are two Houses of Legislature. The Senate is nominated by the king. The deputies are elected by ballot.

33. Q. Is the government firmly established?

The political life of Italy is like a troubled sea which cannot rest. Citi-

zens over 25, with certain qualifications, may vote in a parliamentary election, but out of 8,000,000 voters but 3,000,000 take the trouble to do so. Among the people there is great discontent because of poverty and excessive taxation, the latter being due to immense sums spent on the army and navy.

34. *Q.* Has the present government introduced reforms and improvements?

Previous to 1860 Italy was divided into a large number of petty states, and it was not until 1870 that it was fully united. We may say, then, that all improvements have taken place during the past thirty years. "The cleansing of Rome" has done away largely with the terrible "Roman fever." The Tiber is dredged; omnibuses and trains are seen everywhere; iron bridges span the river; telegraphs, telephones, electric lights, etc., are common, and a system of schools has been established by the government.

EDUCATION AND LITERATURE.

35. *Q.* Is Italy known as a land of education?

She was long the foremost nation of Europe in literature, art and education, and has given birth to some of the greatest men of modern times.

36. *Q.* What is said of her libraries?

The principal public libraries are the Vatican and Minerva at Rome, and one at least in the cities of Naples, Venice, Milan, Turin, Florence, Parma, etc. In some of these are immense literary treasures.

37. *Q.* Name some other attractions.

There are museums, cabinets of art and wonderful picture galleries, making Italy the Mecca of artists. Literary and scientific societies have existed ever since the fourteenth century. Observatories are found in the principal cities.

38. *Q.* Is the language of all Italy the same?

Only the written language. Among

the common people are various dialects almost as unlike as different tongues. It is in Tuscany that the Italian language is spoken in its purity.

39. Q. What educational privileges are found?

The universities of Italy once had a world-wide reputation such as a few in Germany now enjoy. There are a large number of these, one at least in each of seventeen principal cities. Beside these there are other schools of high grade, while elementary education is compulsory.

40. Q. Is this new law effective?

The latest report says that only 25 per cent of children between six and twelve attend school. In every 100 marriages 37 bridegrooms and 52 brides cannot write. Among the young men drawn for the army and navy a large percentage can neither read nor write.

41. Q. Is this fact receiving attention?

It is. All departments of the government from the king down see the neces-

sity of a more practical and widespread education. One deputy has dared to say that the remedy for ignorance and immorality will be found only in schools where an education may be acquired "founded on the Bible."

42. *Q.* Where is there a special lack in practical instruction?

In schools for girls. There has been a sentiment, so common in both papal and heathen countries, that girls needed little learning. Their great charm in Italy has been to know little and to think less. But the queen and noble ladies are striving to better these conditions.

43. *Q.* What is one peculiar hindrance?

The fact that men in trade or earning six or eight pounds per month would feel degraded if their daughters or sisters were educated to think or act for themselves, or to do anything toward self-support.

44. *Q.* Mention another hindrance.

It is stated in a late report on female education that much harm springs from

the influence of nuns, which is felt even in government schools.

RELIGION.

45. *Q.* What is the religion of Italy?

The Roman Catholic faith is nominally the state religion, but since the establishment of the kingdom the temporal power of the Pope has been greatly diminished.

46. *Q.* What condition prevailed before that?

The Pope claimed unlimited power both in temporal and spiritual matters.

47. *Q.* Who is the Pope?

He is the head of the Roman Catholic Church in all the world. The present Pope is Leo XIII. He was born March 2, 1810, and elected Pope February, 20, 1878. His home is in the Vatican. He is regarded as the regular successor of St. Peter.

48. *Q.* What is the Vatican?

It is the papal palace at Rome, one of the most magnificent in the world. It is attached to St. Peter's Church and contains rare statuary, a large museum, a picture gallery filled with paintings by the old masters, and a library in which is the most valuable manuscript collection in the world. There are in the palace 4,422 rooms.

49. Q. What has been the spirit of the Roman Catholic Church toward Protestant missions in Italy?

Previous to 1870 it meant imprisonment to preach the Gospel in Rome, and death if persisted in. The Bible was not circulated among the people until that date. On entering Italy tourists were compelled to have their trunks searched for contraband Bibles.

50. Q. What has been the result of such religious training?

As in other purely Catholic countries, while churches were numerous and splendid, and the power and wealth of the few unlimited, the masses of the people were ignorant and poor.

51. Q. What are they taught to worship?

The object of special adoration is the Virgin Mary, while saints in large numbers are supposed to intercede for the faithful. There are holy shrines and pictures and images innumerable in the churches. Among the last is "the most holy Bambino," which is kept in one of the churches, and copies of which are found in many others. Bambino means baby, and this is an image of the baby Jesus, which they believe was carved from a piece of the true cross. This modern doll is covered with precious gems, and its stiff little fingers are hidden by costly rings. Its head wears a massive crown covered with jewels. The poor people believe that the sight or touch of this image will cure their sick children, and it is sometimes called "The Little Doctor." During the season devoted to Christmas festivities this doll is displayed ten days in a manger, and there are ceremonies of great magnificence in all the churches. This is only one instance

showing how the people of Italy are kept from Jesus.

52. *Q.* Are these images still worshipped?

Yes; there is no change noticeable in the churches.

53. *Q.* What improvement did come when church and state were divided?

The government began at once to establish public schools all over the land, and further persecution of Protestants was forbidden. The Bible was issued by their own publishers, and thousands of copies were circulated in a short time after the Pope's temporal power was diminished.

PROTESTANT MISSIONS.

54. *Q.* What churches have established missions in Italy?

The Waldensians, faithful through long persecution, stand first in numbers, having 5,596 members. The Italian Evangelical Church has 1,765, the

Methodist Episcopal 2,326, the Wesleyan Methodist 1,505, the Baptist 790. There are other evangelistic agencies at work, both native and foreign.

55. *Q.* When did the Methodist Episcopal denomination begin its work?

In 1871 under Dr. Leroy Vernon.

56. *Q.* How has it prospered?

It was organized into a conference in 1881. It includes Italy and also has appointments in Switzerland and Austria. There are in the conference three American missionaries, 25 native preachers, 21 local preachers, 2,326 members, 1,098 children in Sunday-school. In Rome is a boys' school, young ladies' and girls' schools, industrial and theological schools.

57. *Q.* Is there steady progress?

The presiding elder of Rome district writes: "There are many more who would come to our services were it not for continual persecution, the loss both of work and bread, and the many influences which corrupt Italian society to-day." Under these circumstances a gain of 331 members is given for 1898.

58. Q. What effect have Protestant missions had upon the Catholic Church in Italy?

A note of warning has been sounded through their papers, beginning, "The second decade of the twentieth century will see a Protestant population of Romans." The priests have also set on foot efforts to reach the classes who are being brought into Protestant missions.

59. Q. What gives the Methodist Episcopal Church an advantage in Rome?

A very fine location and building in which are a preparatory school, theological seminary, and two chapels, one for Italian, the other for English service. It is in the centre of the city, quite near the government buildings and the Vatican.

60. Q. What work has the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society connected with the above church done in Italy?

Its first work was begun in 1877 by employing three Bible women under charge of Dr. and Mrs. Vernon. In 1887 as many as thirteen Bible women were

at work among—usually—the poor families. Much good was done by these faithful women.

61. *Q.* What step of progress was taken in 1885?

The first missionary of the society, Miss Emma Hall, was sent to Rome. After careful preparatory work a home and orphanage were established, in 1888. Among the many pupils has been a granddaughter of Garibaldi. In 1893 a desirable property for a girls' home school was secured, and in May, 1894, it was dedicated. This house was first built for a nunnery, or nun's school, and is at the west end of the city. It has a large garden abounding in a variety of fruit.

62. *Q.* How many departments of work are being carried on?

The Isabella Clark Crèche is established for the reception and care of children from two to seven years of age. The rooms are open from 7 A. M. to 7 P. M. This has been a success from the beginning. Next comes the kindergarten, then the Sunday-school with

more than 50 children every Sunday afternoon. The girls' school teaches not only the usual studies but dressmaking, embroidery, machine sewing, etc. These girls sustain an Epworth League. The school for the higher education of girls is also well patronized, and its success is well assured. The Bible is read and taught in these schools, and the teachers say, "Our aim is not to force, but to win them to Christ." Miss Hall and three missionary teachers are the care takers in this great enterprise.

63. Q. What is the outlook for Protestantism in Italy?

Bishop Goodsell sums up the many difficulties and slow progress, making a not altogether hopeful picture, but gives the following wise and true statement: "Religion has been so long an avoidance of penalty rather than a love of good that the truth can hardly reach the adult, and has a future only when buried in the heart of a child." So in Italy, as everywhere, our Lord comes to his own "as a little child."

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